

1941
R3F221

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
For Administrative Use Only



FARM LABOR NOTES

May 20, 1942

Extracts from reports of field representatives

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Bureau of Agricultural Economics

Sources indicated by initials:

BAE	Bureau of Agricultural Economics
FLC	Farm Labor Committee
RLSC	Regional Labor Supply Committee
FSA	Farm Security Administration
WB	War Board
OI	Office of Information

NEW ENGLAND STATES

NEW ENGLAND:

While estimates of the total number of farm workers, family and hired, indicate a three percent increase as compared with a year ago, the steady shift to less efficient workers is definitely preventing the full utilization of the normal productive capacity of New England Farms. To a material extent, increased use is being made of family labor to offset the reduction shown in the number of hired laborers. This means that the housewife, or high school boy or girl, is now working part-time the equivalent of two days or more per week to cover as far as possible the work of the hired man who took a defense industry job. April weather was favorable to farm operations and farm operators, recognizing war needs, are undoubtedly planting as heavily as their local situation will permit. Nevertheless the fact remains that in all too many instances normal production plans are being reduced or limited by the shortage of essential and efficient farm labor in New England. (BAE)

WPA persons could be trained as dairy hands if this occupation were added to the War Production Board war classification list, but the transporting of these people, many of whom have families, from towns to farms appears to present a problem difficult of solution.

The NYA is investigating possibility of referring boys aged 16 and 17 who have been out of high school for 6 months to the Quoddy project for training in dairy work. After receiving 160 hours of training a month, 40 of which would be in the classroom, they would be sufficiently trained at the end of 1½ to 2 months to assist dairy farmers. (RLS Committee)

MAINE:

In Aroostook County it may be necessary to import French Canadian labor. Elsewhere in Maine, labor for harvesting will probably be available.

The Commissioner of Labor in Maine has approved the employment of children over 12 on farms in their own communities. (RLS Committee)

VERMONT:

Although recognizing that the registration, selection and referral of workers is primarily an employment office function, because of the type of referrals to be made and because of certain moral responsibilities assumed by the Volunteer Land Corps in its recruitment program, which under present conditions cannot be assumed by the USES or the Extension Service, the performance of certain Employment Service functions are waived in this case by the USES in Vermont.

The Volunteer Land Corps will recruit from colleges and secondary schools outside of Vermont boys over 16 and girls over 18 for work on acceptable Vermont farms at a minimum of \$21.00 per month plus board and room.

The Volunteer Land Corps will obtain the necessary permission of parents or guardians and provide for physical examinations.

The Volunteer Land Corps will appoint county or area representatives to act as liaison men, and to represent the Volunteer Land Corps in resolving any problems which may arise.

The USES, through its local offices, and the Vermont Extension Service, through the County Extension offices, will jointly supply information regarding the program to county farmers.

The local offices of the USES will receive farmer orders for Land Corps volunteers.

All orders for Land Corps volunteers received by local offices of the USES will be turned over after processing to the appropriate area representatives of the Volunteer Land Corps for final approval as to suitability of the farms involved. It is definitely understood by all parties to this arrangement that the Volunteer Land Corps shall have sole responsibility for determining the suitability of any farm as applied to the referral of Land Corps Volunteers, and should rejections of any farm orders be found necessary because of unsuitability as indicated above, it shall be the responsibility of the appropriate area representative of the Volunteer Land Corps to make the necessary explanation to the farmers involved so that no prejudice may be incurred by the USES or the Vermont Extension Service.

The appropriate area representative of the Volunteer Land Corps will make immediate arrangements with the New York office of the Corps to furnish the required number of volunteers to fill approved orders and will notify the appropriate local USES offices as to when volunteers will arrive.

The local offices of the USES will notify the appropriate farmers of the time of arrival of volunteers and of the transportation arrangements which may be necessary.

The appropriate area representative of the Volunteer Land Corps will be present at the time of each volunteer's first contact with the farmer who is to employ him, and will maintain periodic contacts with the employer farmer during the period of employment.

It is understood that the farmer will pay the volunteer directly at the rate of at least \$21.00 monthly, plus board and room. This is not to be considered as setting a standard wage. Farmers and Volunteers may enter into such additional wage arrangements as may be mutually acceptable.

Recognizing quite frankly that in the experimental stages some problems which have not been anticipated are bound to arise, it is nevertheless hoped that through a common sense approach and plan of action, and a sincere desire on the part of all participants to make a success of the program, the Volunteer Land Corps may in Vermont prove its worth to such an extent that in another year it may be expanded to become national in scope. (Farm Labor Committee)

Chairman of the VLC is Dorothy Thompson. Other officers are Herbert Agar, Peter Grim, George Havell and Nancy Elaine. Arthur Root is the executive officer. Headquarters are at 8 West 40th Street, New York. (Press)

MASSACHUSETTS:

The most serious farm labor problem exists on dairy farms and other types of farming where year-round men are needed. A considerable amount of summer or seasonal help will be needed especially in the market garden sections of the State, but the farmers

and the committees feel that they will be able to get this work done by the use of high school boys and girls. Farmers are realizing that they cannot possibly get qualified and experienced workers. They also realize that they will have to pay wages commensurate with what these youngsters can earn by working in stores and other jobs in the cities.

There seems to be no reason why the farmers of the State of Massachusetts will not be able to carry out their summer seasonal operations as usual and perhaps even to some greater extent than usual. Year-round workers are scarce and this means that dairy-men and others who need this type of worker will have to resort to the greater use of machinery and in some cases to working harder and longer hours themselves.

The possible use of conscientious objectors for farm work was considered at a meeting in Boston.

The United States Employment Service and the Department of Education have also been working out plans and procedure for registering high school boys and girls who are willing to work on farms during the summer vacation. (FL Committee)

MIDDLE ATLANTIC STATES

NEW JERSEY:

Southern New Jersey reports acute shortages of farm labor. Situation has arisen because of following short-time factors: (1) an earlier than usual season has advanced the need of migratory workers for harvesting truck crops, and (2) the inability of the Farm Placement Service to meet farmers' labor requirements. It is alleged that there will be a considerable loss in the asparagus crop, particularly the quality crop. FSA camps in the Bridgeton, Swedesboro and Burlington areas are expected to ease the situation. Although construction of the camps near Bridgeton and Swedesboro has not been completed, they were opened for occupancy during the week of May 11. After a delay, the development of a camp near Burlington is under way.

Apparently labor will have to be recruited from the South to meet labor requirements. Several large groups of workers already have been brought in from Florida. A need is developing for mass transportation by common carrier for workers from the South following labor clearance by the Farm Placement Service.

Attempts also are being made to recruit farm labor from Philadelphia and New York City. (FSA)

PENNSYLVANIA:

The Pennsylvania Cannery Association recently conducted a survey which indicates that between 5,500 and 6,000 women will be needed in the canneries throughout the State at the peak of the six weeks season beginning August 1.

Although there is said to be a shortage of labor all over the State, farm work had progressed further than usual by May 1. (BAE)

NEW YORK:

Reports emphasize shortage of dairy help, high farm wages and low milk prices. Defense jobs and draft are taking workers. Dairy farmers are reducing and disposing of herds. A minority of counties indicate no shortage of labor at present but are fearful of harvest situation. (BAE)

DELAWARE:

The farm placement people are not very active in Delaware because of their urgent need in recruiting industrial labor. The "work or fight" law is being urged in Delaware - and used in some instances to scare indifferent labor to accept jobs. (BAE)

There is no urgent need for additional farm labor. It is likely that an FSA migrant camp will be located in this State. (FSA)

MARYLAND:

The labor situation is about the same as last month. Labor is scarce and what is available is incompetent. There are very few isolated sections of the State where surplus labor exists. There are many additional workers available in nearby towns and villages, especially on the Eastern Shore. Hundreds of colored workers, both men and women, as well as many white laborers, are drawing various forms of compensation or otherwise working on WPA and other Government projects. Recently Maryland has revived the old "work or fight" law in certain counties of the State, especially on the Eastern shore. Just recently several hundred colored people who ordinarily work at oyster shucking, etc., were brought before county magistrates to explain why they would not accept farm work. Most of these people immediately searched, and found, farm jobs. (BAE)

The USES reports that the labor needs for the Eastern Shore will be about 900 workers and that there are available accommodations for this number. FSA mobile camps will be located at Westover in Somerset County, Pocomoke City in Worcester County, Hebron in Wicomico County, and Vienna in Dorchester County for fruit, berry, and vegetable harvests during the late spring and summer seasons.

According to newspaper accounts, Governor O'Connor has asked Federal Manpower Commission chairman McNutt whether the invocation of Maryland's compulsory work law would fit in with the Government's manpower mobilization program. This law, upon invocation by the Governor, would compel all able-bodied men between 18 and 50, not engaged in regular useful occupations, to register with clerks of courts, following which action, the Governor could assign them to duties deemed necessary for the safety of the State. The State's Attorney of Anne Arundel County has asked the Governor to invoke the law. (FSA)

VIRGINIA:

Due to the dry weather in the Norfolk area, the strawberry crop is short. But even so, the Employment Service has not been able to secure the number of pickers asked for. Nor have they been able to fill the four migratory camps established in Norfolk and Princess Anne Counties and on the Eastern Shore. (BAE)

No labor supply problem is anticipated in the near future on the Eastern Shore. The status of FSA mobile farm labor camps, originally planned for this region, is uncertain. (FSA)

WEST VIRGINIA:

The State Farm Labor Committee looks to the new crop season with reasonable confidence that the labor reservoir will be adequate to meet demands and the "farmettes" so familiar in the first World War will not be needed at least during 1942. Today's conference developed the sentiment that although the "reservoir" of farm labor appears to be adequate, the problem is to ferret it out and make it available at the points most needed and when required. (Press)

NORTH CAROLINA:

This has been one of the earliest seasons in several years and consequently the number of workers has increased more than usual from April to May.

According to acreage indications, farmers are going to increase their acres this year and in view of the so-called "labor shortage," they will have to work more women and children and the farm operator will have to do more work. (BAE)

The Employment Service tried to recruit strawberry pickers from Florida for the Wallace-Chadbourn sections. There is a temporary shortage of migrant workers who customarily travel up the Seaboard. (FSA)

A serious problem in connection with the harvesting of potatoes was presented by C. W. W. Pittman, Regional Farm Placement Supervisor, who pointed out the problem of getting transient labor from the deep South. It appears that a sufficient amount of labor of the type which is generally used in harvesting potatoes is available in Florida, if satisfactory transportation facilities could be provided. These laborers have been accustomed to traveling in "jalopies" and dilapidated trucks. They have no tires for this type of transportation this year and they are faced with the additional problem of gasoline rationing. It is the opinion of the Employment Service representatives that this problem is the responsibility of the War Board. It is particularly difficult for the small farmers to handle this problem because, if they should organize a pool for transportation expenses in advance, they would have no guarantee that this labor would reach the farm. (BAE)

SOUTH CAROLINA:

There is still complaint of labor shortage, but it is thought that the supply is sufficient to insure normal or better production with a favorable season. (BAE)

GEORGIA:

During April the farm labor supply was adequate in the major agricultural areas of Georgia. Seemingly, the so-called "labor shortage" is more psychological than

actual. There is a possibility that, with the increased acreage in peanuts, local farm labor shortages may appear during the harvest season. (BAE)

The U. S. Employment Service has so far not been able to inspire the farmers with much confidence in its ability to supply farm labor.

There is a feeling of criticism and even resentment in all counties visited against the Government policy of carrying on work projects and relief activities under present wartime conditions. It is claimed that such policies are encouraging a considerable portion of floating labor away from the farms and enabling some such labor to loaf a substantial part of the time on a higher wage rate than the farmer can afford to pay.

Selective Service Boards are generally not allowing much deferment to farm workers called for the army. (BAE)

I have been greatly surprised by the defeatist attitude of mind on the part of the Employment Service representatives in the regional, State, and local offices. They seemed to have few ideas as to procedures by which farm laborers may be recruited and seemed to accept the conclusion that little can be done for various reasons explained at length. Ordinarily, a new agency is characterized by unbounded enthusiasm and a desire to accomplish more than is possible. I sympathize with them on their job, since they are mostly inexperienced in farm placement work and have been operating in a world of surplus labor. This defeatist attitude is not confined entirely to the Employment Service since many persons present at the War Board meeting yesterday revealed similar attitudes. It is very likely that the folks in the counties may be more realistic and imaginative and do a pretty good job without much help from their State office. (BAE)

FLORIDA:

Generally speaking, the farm labor supply was adequate in Florida during April. Weather conditions throughout the spring have been such as to keep down the need of a maximum labor force. Just before the peak season for tomatoes and peppers and other vegetables in Palm Beach and Broward Counties, 14 inches of rain put most of the vegetables under a lake of water which did not recede for a week or 10 days, therefore, completely destroying the crop. Enough labor was released from these areas to supply the other areas of Florida, especially around Lake Okeechobee. There has been some shortage of sugar cane workers.

The United States Employment Service has been very active in Florida and has done much in shifting labor from one area to another within the State.

There has been no real active participation of the war boards or farm labor subcommittees in dealing with farm labor problems in Florida.

In the general farming area of Florida (Northwestern section) there was no shortage of farm labor during April. Local shortages may develop during the cotton, tobacco, and peanut harvest seasons (July, August, and September). These local shortages

can be averted by well planned "exchange of labor" programs, since there appears to be a sufficient on-farm labor supply to meet the harvest demands. (BAE)

There has been vigorous recruiting and transporting of Negro workers to Delaware, Virginia, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania without the previous knowledge of local authorities.

In St. Lucie County a shortage of 450 citrus and tomato pickers was averted by shifting packing house workers to the fields. Another shortage was forestalled in lower Martin County by releasing Negro workers from the nearby Camp Murphy.

Farm Placement officials meeting at Columbia, South Carolina, on April 29 reported that a heavy rain had ruined the potato crop in the Hastings area of Florida and that there was a small surplus of workers ready to migrate northward. Some of these were unable to leave because of the tire shortage and fear of gasoline rationing. (FSA)

EAST SOUTH CENTRAL STATES

MISSISSIPPI:

There has been very little change in the labor situation during the past week. There are many general complaints of labor shortages but few actual cases reported of farm operations being slowed down because of labor shortages. (DAE)

TENNESSEE:

The publicity given to the labor situation, and the activities of the State Fair Board, in encouraging more use of tractors and more efficient use of machinery than in the past, are thought to have been factors in changing an almost desperate situation into one that is now near normal in many localities. (DAE)

MISSISSIPPI:

Some farmers will not be able to get their usual amount of work done because of hoeing, and any long period of wet weather during the next six weeks would probably result in considerable abandonment of acreage in some areas.

In the Delta where much of the farm work is done by sharecropper families, some of the labor that is available is being used for other work. Conditions are very unfavorable. During the Delta there are some cases where farmers are having difficulty getting sufficient hands.

The shortage of truck crops has increased this year and it will undoubtedly be one of the usual acreage in Mississippi. The supply of available labor is less than usual but only in a few instances has harvesting been delayed because of shortage of hands. (DAE)

ALABAMA:

Progress to date is not much if any behind normal. Tractors are being used more extensively.

The labor supply for the present is probably adequate though with little margin of safety. (DAE)

WEST SOUTH CENTRAL STATES

TEXAS:

The Texas Labor Subcommittee is the most active in the region. A special committee has been appointed to prepare a definite program for the labor subcommittee and this special committee will meet next month in advance of the regular committee meeting and will prepare a program to submit to the committee. They anticipate taking positive action in dealing with the migration of Mexicans from the state, the need for certain types of harvesting machinery, the mobilization of students, women, or other partially employed groups and such other matters as might expedite the harvesting of Texas crops. (BAE)

It is not thought now that the situation with regard to lack of packing facilities (Valley Tomatoes) is as serious as had been feared - though the problem is not solved. (WB)

There is no labor shortage in Texas at the present time but we feel that if one does arise the Texas Labor Subcommittee will be able to devise some means of dealing with it. (BAE)

Requests for FSA migratory labor camps have come in from Harris and Deaf Smith Counties and from Plainview in Hale County. (FSA)

LOUISIANA:

The Farm Labor situation in this area during the last 30 days has not been affected by any wide-spread labor shortage. The strawberry harvest has been in full swing in Arkansas and Louisiana. The Louisiana harvest has passed its peak without any serious loss or probability of labor shortage. The picking price has been constant through the season.

No further seasonal peak is anticipated in Louisiana until the cotton picking and rice harvest. According to the administrator of the State Division of Employment Security, there will be no shortage of labor in Louisiana in 1942. The Louisiana Labor Subcommittee has been organized as a subcommittee of the War Board. (BAE)

ARKANSAS:

The Director of the Farm Placement Activities of the United States Employment Service in Arkansas states that sufficient labor will be available to harvest the Arkansas strawberry crop. The practice initiated last year of using Negro labor for the strawberry harvest has continued on an expanded scale in 1942 and probably has prevented a serious labor shortage from developing in White County. The present situation is favorable and we are not anticipating a necessity for any action to bring in new supplies of farm labor in Arkansas. (BAE)

The FSA camp at Springdale (Washington County) opened on May 1. (FSA)

OKLAHOMA:

In Oklahoma more counties indicated labor surplus than indicated labor shortages in the last 30 days. It is likely that Oklahoma will be better supplied with farm labor than the other States in this area. No serious shortage is anticipated in any area in 1942. (BAE)

EAST NORTH CENTRAL STATES

OHIO:

Local farm labor shortages may develop within the next two months in Stark, Franklin, Adams, Harrison, Wayne, Hancock, Madison, and the northern part of Cuyahoga County in northwestern Ohio; in Paul and Hancock, and to a lesser extent in Van Wert, Adams, and Allen Counties in northwestern Ohio; in Franklin and to some extent in Madison in central Ohio; in Montgomery and Lucas and to some extent in Butler and Hamilton Counties in southwestern Ohio.

The shortages which may develop will likely be most acute for year-round help for dairy and general livestock farming with some shortage of seasonal labor for hay harvest and other seasonal operations of the usual kind. Seasonal sources of such labor have been entirely local. I should mention here that the problem of seasonal labor for sugar beets and tomatoes appears to be well taken care of. Both the Employment Service and the sugar beet communities report that European migrant labor is available in larger numbers than ever before and is working more readily than in the past. In another matter, the Employment Service has received a considerable number of requests for help for ordinary farm work during the busy season. This work is the sugar beet harvest which is necessary. The seasonal labor used in such work is used quite largely for tomatoes also. Therefore, we should have no trouble in getting tomatoes picked except in certain areas of West-Central Ohio where only tomatoes are grown.

Discussion of the transfer of the workers from areas such as Portsmouth and the various territory to centers like Cincinnati for training purposes developed the opinion of the Committee that many complications would arise and would be greatly hastened from a community standpoint. There would undoubtedly be considerable pressure if the workers from rural areas were required for training and accepted for employment by Cincinnati employers in preference to workers resident in Cincinnati who are presently unemployed.

Recommendation was made and carried that a program be initiated toward the development of an agricultural training program similar to the one operating in the National Defense Industrial training program. It was suggested that in-plant training as far as could be conducted in the same fashion as in-plant training in factories. Another suggestion for the conduct of an agricultural training program was that unemployed camps be used as training centers, looking toward the long time program of education upon and inexperienced youth to farm occupations. A training program of this sort was suggested by agricultural leaders two months ago. The Chairman stated that in attending a meeting of leading farm organizations where the need for just such a program was discussed. It is recognized that the benefit which would be derived from such a plan in 1943 and ensuing years would be greater than results realized during the present season. (HLS Committee)

As a result of fear of local labor shortage and an anticipated need for the replacement of outside workers, requests for FSA camps have come in from a block of counties in the northwest corner of the State where the main need for seasonal workers is in sugar-beet harvest, onions and fruits and truck crops. (FSA)

INDIANA:

The general labor situation at the present time does not seem to be at all acute. There are certain individuals who would like to hire some additional farm labor but their problems are being solved by having unusually favorable weather conditions this spring which makes possible a longer season in which to complete the work. There has been more than the usual amount of custom work and probably there will be more at harvest time this year than there was last year.

We received a few comments from strawberry and potato growers who said they were needing a substantial crew to pick berries and cut seed potatoes and did not know at the present time where they would be able to get the necessary help.

The farm labor subcommittees in northeastern Indiana advise us that arrangements have already been made for Mexican labor in the sugar-beet fields. The beet factories are using the facilities of their contractors. (BAE)

Demands for FHA camps for migrant workers have come in from Adams, Tipton and Pulaski Counties, largely because of a fear of inadequate labor supplies in these areas. (FSA)

ILLINOIS:

From reports, it appears to me that there is now and will continue to be a real shortage of farm labor in counties containing or adjacent to industrial centers and orchard plants. An acute shortage of labor at the present time was reported for the following counties: St. Clair, Winnebago, DeKalb, Will, Lake, Cook, LaSalle and Polk (except severe shortage within 30 days if the Department Land Acquisition project gets under way.)

In most instances, the reported shortage is of single men. In the Chicago and St. Louis milk sheds the demand for labor would be for probably year round help. In most other counties of the State, the demand would be largely for temporary help varying from a few weeks to several months. Frequent reports from various parts of the State indicate that a fair amount of married help is available. So many farmers have used single men for temporary help for so long that they do not have the housing facilities to care for a married man. Occasionally one observes a trailer being used to house such help. The Farm Placement Service states that they are encouraging dairy farmers in the Chicago milk shed area to convert upstairs rooms into apartments and so forth, in order to accommodate hired help with families. Some migrant help is needed in growing crop areas and this is being supplied by the Farm Placement Service.

A considerable variety of measures are being used in various counties to meet the farm labor situation. In the first place, practically all County Fair Boards and the employment service exhibit a high degree of cooperation in attacking the problem. U. S. Employment Service now has 30 Farm Placement men on the job in areas that now need such assistance in supplying farm workers. (BAE)

County and Board Labor situation reports varied from an ample supply in some areas to some shortages in others. Except in local areas near industrial centers, the majority of reports indicated farmers would get by with their existing work. The reports rather generally anticipated a real shortage of labor to develop at harvest time. In a general way, the labor situation was reported to be better in the southern than in the central and northern third of the State. Reports of a tight labor situation in the dairy areas are numerous as are reports of frequent changes in labor due to higher wage offers in various lines of work elsewhere. U. S. Employment Service, County Farm Advisers, County and Board officers, civic organizations, Chambers of Commerce, Vocational Agricultural teachers, and other local organizations were listed as cooperating to varying degrees in the effort to help meet farm labor needs in different counties. Counties in which the acreage of special crops such as broom corn and raising crops are important are especially concerned about this labor situation, and in some instances, such as broom corn, it would seem likely to prevent any increase in acreage this season. The supply of skilled help in the dairy areas is rather meager and may prevent some farms from reaching their goals for the increased production of milk.

In talking to farmers I find they are quite concerned about the future supply of power equipment, particularly tractors and like machines. In this line they agree that you can readily understand why farmers are thinking about these items. Tractors and combines help step up work production and are very materially, farmers are continually surprised at with their reports of large acreages harvested alone or with the help of a young son or a hired man. A farmer in Rock Island County recently told me he did not worry much about farm help in handling his different crops and was not too concerned during the war if he could be sure of being able to buy another tractor or combine if needed. He asked me if I were ever the Department official in Washington really understood the importance of having these two items of farm machinery in good workable condition.

The farmers do not look with favor on the farmette idea of helping the farm labor situation. Farmettes have grown up on the farm and have had some experience with farm work and, of course help out, mainly on their home farms. Occasionally I see the wife or daughter of a farmer working in the field but this is not common as was the case in the Dakota. Farmers are much more inclined to favor the plan of sending high school boys and college students for farm work and expect considerable help from that source.

Unless we have prolonged periods of wet weather during the harvest season, Illinois farmers will get by fairly well in 1942, except in areas near industrial centers and war plants. (BAE)

Urgent May 8 - To help relieve labor shortages in dairy industries available from many employees entering the country's armed forces, the department of dairy industry of the University of Illinois College of Agriculture has scheduled a two weeks' training school for prospective dairy plant workers and those who have had limited experience in the plants. The course opened May 4 and continues to the 15th.

Fowlerville, Mo., Aug. 3 - Five Fowlerville business and professional men, who left their places of business for a whole day to help Kyle House, a local farmer, get in his spring crops, discovered that the farmer gets in the equivalent of the city man's days in one.

Farmer House and them to work at 7 a.m. They finished their job at 10 p.m. The farmer put in a couple of hours doing chores before the city men showed up.

One hundred and seven men of the Fowlerville Commercial club have volunteered to do farm work this year on farms where labor shortages have been created by the draft and migration of boys to war industry jobs. (Press)

U. S. Employment Service, War Relocation, and War Relocation Commission are facilitating together in closest manner possible with actual clearance and understanding of work areas.

Registration of agricultural employables in 1944 rolls has been made available and will be made available to U. S. Employment Service.

WPA is making every effort to have every qualified man on its register available for farm help under provisions which compel acceptance of bona fide offers for farm employment at current wages.

Farm labor supply received a serious setback when the Social Security ruled that pensioners could not work on farms without penalty in loss of pension. Really serious is the ruling of the Social Security that men receiving unemployment compensation would have a fine equal to 3/4 of farm earnings deducted from their compensation. Any relaxation of these rulings would help production for food. (Press)

WISCONSIN:

The labor supply in the northern counties seems sufficient to meet demands of farmers.

In the central, eastern, and southern counties, respondents indicate the need for more workers. Some are needed on a year-round basis to replace workers taken from the armed forces or those who have gone into industry. The greatest need will be for temporary help after mid-June when the harvest of hay and canning peas and other work will get under way.

Farm respondents comment on the fact that with the use of tractors for plowing in the crop, one can do much additional work in the same period of time. (Press)

WEST NORTH CENTRAL STATES

GENERAL SITUATION:

In the Great Plains area the States generally are showing an increasing recognition of the need for meeting the farm labor problems within the immediate locality, insofar as possible. More and more attention is being given to improved utilization of the farm labor force at hand and to making plans for using additional sources of farm labor, such as town students and other town residents. The need for appraising the farm labor situation in terms of meeting the problem is increasingly recognized. The situation in North Dakota is least desirable in this respect. It appears that undue emphasis is being placed there on information as to farm labor needs without giving sufficient attention to ways of overcoming possible farm labor shortages.

The matter of interrelationships between agencies concerned with farm labor is generally much improved over the situation a couple of months ago. Labor Committees at both State and county levels are functioning as the labor work groups for both the War Boards and the Planning Committees. The problem of coordination between the policies of Selective Service and the labor needs for increased production goals is a continuing problem. However, the attention of labor committees to this problem is bearing results, particularly where representatives of Selective Service are invited to attend committee meetings and discuss the military requirements. The Employment Service is working very closely with the Labor Committees and War Boards. The relationship between agencies seems to be on a high level in all States as far as we know. (BAE)

There has been some confusion in several of the States as to the place of farm labor subcommittees of agricultural planning committees in the handling of the farm labor problem. This difficulty is being straightened out gradually. The War Boards are looking more and more to the farm labor committees for assistance in this matter. An important service which farm labor subcommittees can perform is to keep the War Boards fully informed of the labor situation so that the War Boards may take necessary action as occasions demand. Further, the full utilization of local labor supplies, including students, town and village people, women, and other forces, can be obtained better through plans worked out by labor subcommittees. (BAE)

MINNESOTA:

A rather comprehensive survey, carried on under the direction of the State War Board, through which each farmer was asked by local IAA representatives, relative to his farm labor needs during the season, indicates that there will be no labor shortage, at least not until harvest time.

The principal change from other years seems to be that fewer month men are employed and that more day labor is being used. It appears that employers and employees have not been able to work out satisfactory terms for monthly wages. It appears, also, that farm workers are expecting monthly wages to be higher than employers feel it necessary to pay. As a result, instead of hiring out for a period of time, many of these workers are accepting day labor. (BAE)

UTAH:

The Employment Service reported no shortage of labor on farms at present and that the agency really has a surplus of prospective workers enrolled. Some one hundred or so regular monthly farm hands were available for transfer within the State, but it is estimated they had been discouraged from transferring out of the State.

It reported satisfactory handling of special problem areas. The beet sugar areas seemed to have arranged for sufficient labor through other than Employment Service channels, but without the importation of undesirable laborers. The Tama, Utah plant assumes responsibility for beet laborers on farms contracting beets and had already registered enough Mexican labor in the territory to handle the 1942 crop (6,000 acres). The re-opened plant at Haverly (3,500 acres) had arranged to use Indian labor from the Tama Indian Reservation.

The growing crops and the hybrid corn industry were also mentioned and the statement made that plans have been effected to meet the situation. (WAB)

MISSOURI:

The supply of full time hands appears to be adequate at present.

All sections agree that the situation will be acute when harvest starts.

There was general agreement that the migration to defense industry was the chief cause of the critical labor situation anticipated this season.

It was generally felt that WPA workers were unsatisfactory for farm work.

Most committees report that available boys and girls of high school age have been surveyed for farm work.

Most committees have made efforts to make full use of power machinery and equipment available for custom work.

Most committees have done something in the way of promoting plans for exchange work. (FL Committee)

Of most concern is the prospective labor supply is the likelihood that at least 1,000 workers will have to be obtained from other than usual sources during the peak of the strawberry season.

The major drain of rural workers in the area is to the Camp Greener construction job. At present, about 10,000 laborers are employed on the camp, of whom about 80 percent are from the immediate area. It is estimated that about one-half of the latter, 4,000 workers, have come from farms in the strawberry areas. (IME)

Report on a special survey of Atchison County, Missouri, which was shown as representative of highly commercialized, general crop and livestock farms in the Corn Belt, states:

- I. Except for possible adverse weather conditions, farm labor scarcity will be a seriously limiting factor in agricultural production in the county in 1942.
- II. There are indications that farm labor shortage may be a serious obstacle to attainment of county agricultural production goals in 1942.
- III. Close teamwork between the Farm Placement Service, the County Farm Labor Committee, the County Agent and others, is necessary.

Specific recommendations are as follows:

1. Expansion of the USS Farm Placement Staff, which is at present seriously understaffed, and development on the part of that staff of more direct personal contact with farmers.
2. Study of the possibility of reducing peak labor demands by such means as:
 - a) substitution of pasture for hay
 - b) the lengthening of the period of the corn harvest
 - c) more use of combine harvesters in small grain
3. More neighborhood cooperations among farmers especially as regards neighborhood crews.
4. Securing additional seasonal labor from a self-sufficing hill section in the county.
5. Investigation by the Farm Placement Service, at the State level, of the possibility of recruiting qualified farm workers from South Missouri.
6. Development of local training programs. (BAE)

KANSAS:

The State Farm Labor Subcommittee believes that the present farm labor picture will see Kansas through 1942 without serious difficulty.

There is no question but that the supply of surplus labor has been sharply reduced in the State but the shortage, at present, is not sufficient to materially reduce production. Dairy farmers will be the first to suffer and to find it necessary to reduce their output. (BAE)

The wheat harvest, the timothy hay harvest in certain areas, such as northeastern Kansas, and some of the feed crop harvest are expected to be generally the picture

where labor shortage will be most critical. The unusual wheat situation in Kansas, including a heavy amount of planted crop, together with the unusually favorable situation of the volunteer army, will approximate the labor needs. There are possibilities that there will be less differences in time of wheat harvest between southern and northern Kansas than usual.

Plans for utilization of labor in Kansas have received considerable attention. The United States Employment Service setup in the State will include one or more persons being full time to farm placement in each of the 29 district field offices where farm labor is of importance. The Farm Placement Supervisor for the State expects to have a travelling office arrangement during the peak of the wheat harvest.

In addition, WPA, with the active assistance of the State and County Farm Labor Committees, has set up an extensive volunteer representative arrangement.

The Farm Labor Committees, particularly at the county level, have stressed full utilization of available labor.

In the interest of the State Farm Labor Committee, plans have been made for registration and training high school boys from towns and cities for farm work. Representatives of the State Labor Committee met with Governor Arthur and arrangements were made to have the county and local Civilian Defense Councils handle the registration of such boys and also of other town residents for farm work. The vocational Agriculture people are sponsoring the training of town and city boys. Tentative arrangements have also been made to facilitate transportation of migrant farm workers. (BAE)

NORTH DAKOTA:

Generally, it appears that farmers are able to get the required help. Frequent reference is made to the high wages being asked and farmers stress the fact that they cannot pay such wages with present prices, so consequently, the farm emergency will have to be contracted. (BAE)

In North Dakota too much attention is being given to cataloging needs for labor and too little to utilizing the resources; so as to make the most of all available labor. (BAE)

A request for an FSA migratory labor camp has come from Barnes County. The FSA and National Organization of Kappa VII suggests that temporary migrant camps placed at a few strategic points for the purpose of concentrating and distributing migratory farm labor throughout the State would help improve the farm labor market situation. (FSA)

North Dakota was one of the first States in the Great Plains to set up a system of volunteer representatives to cooperate with the Employment Service. It is expected that 700 or more will be active in the State this year. (BAE)

SOUTH DAKOTA:

Most reporters were more optimistic about the future farm labor situation than they were April 1. Most reporters felt that the corn crop would be planted without undue delay. A number still express fears about a shortage during haying and harvesting, but an increasingly large minority feel that sufficient labor will be available during July and August to take care of the small grain and hay crops.

Farmers and ranchers in and around the Black Hills have been hit hardest by scarcity of farm labor. Many farm laborers in this area are now employed on two large defense projects in the Black Hills. The Sioux Falls defense project is not yet employing enough men to be a factor in the farm labor situation, but the peak of employment may come during harvest periods when the help will be most badly needed. (BAE)

The UNR reports that there is no shortage of farm labor at present. However, the full demand was expected to come later in the spring. Several employment officers reported a surplus of farm labor. The reluctance of farmers to make provision for proper housing, particularly for married hands, seems to be one factor in the labor supply picture.

War construction projects in the Black Hills and Sioux Falls areas are drawing labor from rural areas. Farm wages are from 10 to 30 percent higher than last year. The FSA Labor Relations Specialist recommends temporary harvest camps for this State as well as for North Dakota. (FSA)

The County War Boards and Farm Labor Subcommittees have been quite active in those counties where farm labor supply is apt to be a problem. There is a Farm Labor Subcommittee in every county of the State and about half of these subcommittees held meetings during the past weeks. The Employment Service and the County War Boards are completing a registration of town high school boys for farm work. On the State level, the Executive Committee of the State Farm Labor Subcommittee has been designated to be the work group on the labor problems for the State War Board.

The Employment Service maintains 12 district offices in the State, with one person in each office designated to handle the farm labor work. A list of volunteer representatives was recently published which included more than 500 people. A booklet is expected to be published in the near future regarding the greater use of the available farm labor. This will be published by the Extension Service or mimeographed by the State Farm Labor Subcommittee. (EAS)

NEBRASKA:

For the most part, farm work has advanced to about the usual stage for this time of year. With the exception of individual cases, enough labor has been available to take care of the spring work.....farmers are concerned about extra labor needed during small grain and hay harvest. Comments indicate that many farmers have enough

labor to take care of the regular work, but do not know where the extra help that will be needed during such season can be obtained. Farmers are not optimistic about the use of inexperienced help. (BAB)

In the past it has been the practice for the Great Western Sugar Company to provide beet growers with workers. This year the Company was optimistic regarding the obtaining of sugar-beet laborers in January and February, and by meetings and advertisements over the radio and through the papers encourage sugar-beet growers to plant beets. They began to sign labor contracts in April 1942. A labor shortage was apparent at that time, and it has gradually increased in intensity to date. The Great Western Sugar Company has three labor agents out now, but from all indications they are not getting the anticipated results.

In Scotts Bluff County, where over half of the sugarbeets in Nebraska usually are grown, a 30 percent increase over 1941 seeded acres is anticipated. If labor is not available on about June 1 to 10, however, there is a strong indication that the beets will be destroyed and beans, potatoes, corn or some other crop planted.

The County people estimate that 25 to 35 percent of the beet labor is performed by the operators and the members of their families. An additional 20 to 25 percent is done by part-time local laborers, and the remaining 50 to 60 percent is worked under labor contract. Last year there were approximately 1,200 contract beet laborers in the North Platte Valley. A considerable number of these stayed the year around as a rule, but during the past winter and spring many of these laborers left or took other jobs. The defense plant at Sidney, Nebraska, has taken a great many of them, and the glider school recently announced for Alliance will undoubtedly take more. In regard to those laborers who did not remain the year around, the County people estimate that from 10 to 15 percent will not be hired. Regarding the number of workers needed, the information I have is that the Great Western Sugar Company has requested the Bureau of Immigration to allow them to import a thousand workers from Old Mexico to work in western Nebraska. (B1)

ALBANY:

As all farming, the situation is serious but not yet critical. So far, the spring season has been cold and late which has laid up spring planting generally over the state. Inclusive of sugar beet operations, haying season will be the first critical. Haying hands will be mighty scarce at any wage.

The movement of transient labor into beet areas to date continues to lag considerably that of other years. According to information secured from the U. S. Employment Service, about 2,700 workers have come in to date as compared with a total need of out-of-State workers of about 5,000. (BAS)

Requests for JIA camps have come from Billings, Hardin, Sidney, and Latta. (PSA)

The Billings Gazette of April 29 quotes Governor Ford as follows regarding the Japanese: "I am convinced it would be extremely unwise to bring Japanese into or permit the migration of thousands in family or small groups and scatter them on farms throughout the State. . . . I fear for the safety of any Japanese in this State, unless the army has provided proper protection. . . . We must have assurances that they will be removed when the war is concluded." The last two statements include no date prior to which the people of Montana and the U. S. Army were not in agreement.

Billings is reported that 25 percent of the 18,000 acres in Yellowstone County were seeded and blocking should start during the week of May 4. There are about 1,000 workers in the Billings factory district at present and they say there is a need for 700 to 800 more. According to a letter from the Great Western Company to the district office of the Employment Service dated April 16, there were 27,500 acres of sugar beets under contract at Billings, of which about 11,000 acres will be tended by farm operators and their families and by local laborers. An additional 1,000 acres will be tended by 776 laborers already recruited, and there is a need for 200 additional workers. It was also stated in the letter that because of the inexperience of the workers only 7 to 7½ acres per worker can be expected. In Hardin 10,000 acres have been contracted, of which 6,100 acres were planted on May 1.

It was indicated that about 50 percent as many transient laborers are coming into this area this year as compared to a year ago. The Spanish-American laborers available are being used for all types of farm work this year; this has not been the case in the past. One instance was cited in which a young Spanish-American man was hired at \$75 per month for work other than beet work. The farmer also furnished him a house and other perquisites and is to pay him by the acre when the sugar beet work starts. Local labor is being utilized to the maximum extent according to the people in Big Horn County. The Employment Service has quite a list of high school boys on a register, but it was the belief that they would not do beet work, particularly the blocking and thinning. The Employment Service does, however, have a standing order from the Hanneton Farms for all high school boys 16 years old and over for tractor work. They will take a boy regardless of whether or not he has ever seen a tractor and will teach him to run it.

Apparently conditions in the Sidney factory district are very similar to those in the Hardin district. About the same acreage will be planted in 1942 as was planted in 1941. This is about 5,000 acres under the goal. The farmers are still hopeful and many planted with the idea of destroying later if the labor did not show up. (BAS)

It is reported (May 13) that the sugar beet labor situation is still very serious in the State, with the growers becoming increasingly nervous as to sufficient labor being available. The Glendock district is now reported as having a particularly serious shortage. The growers there say they will grow up many of the beeted land now, unless labor is in sight within 2 weeks' time, and substitute flax or other crops. Blaine County is particularly short of labor, with Phillips and Will Counties having some of their beet acres on a family unit basis. Also, too, the land reclamation project will provide considerable labor for the Phillips County growers. On the whole, it appears probable at the present time that around 60,000 acres of sugar beets will be harvested as compared with the proposed goal of 86,000 acres for Montana.

It is also reported that sheep shearers and lambers are quite short, particularly in central and eastern Montana. It is probable that some sheep will not be sheared this year, although the sheep men generally expect to get by this season. There is talk of many of the sheep men reducing their flocks for next season and farm operators, who have both cattle and sheep, increasing their cattle and reducing sheep. (BAE)

The organization of farm labor work in Montana is on a strong basis. The general premise is that the farm labor problem will be met largely on a local level. County Farm Labor Subcommittees now have been organized in the counties where the farm labor situation appears to justify such activity. The interrelationships between agricultural agencies and other agencies interested in labor are satisfactory. (BAE)

WOLING:

In viewing the formerly dependable labor supply has largely vanished. Shortages of farm and ranch labor are rather acute at the present time with the worst conditions existing in the irrigated sections. The harvesting of sugar beets has not as yet been curtailed due to the shortage of labor, but it is distinctly realized that the labor situation, beginning with blocking and thinning, due to begin in about 8 days (i.e., about May 20) will be very serious. Sheep shearers are distressed to obtain despite a substantial increase in the unit price for shearing.

For the remaining activities that are being carried on there is only a slight shortage of help. It is our belief that the crops will be sown and the livestock cared for in proper manner up to laying and other crop harvest. When this starts we will find that there is a marked shortage of skilled and unskilled farm and ranch hands.

The Farm Labor Subcommittees are very active, serving both the War Board and the Agricultural Planning Committee. The matter of relationships has been worked out on the State level. The Employment Service is maintaining 12 offices in the State with definite provisions made for handling farm labor. The County Agricultural Agents are serving as farm placement officers in those towns and cities where there is an agricultural agent but no Employment Service office. In other towns volunteer workers have been selected. Registration of all workers, as well as the registration of the needs of farmers and ranchers is now being carried out at these local offices. In most of the cities and larger towns, the high school boys are all registered for farm work and will be used on the ranches for laying and harvesting work as soon as needed. In a number of cities, a training program is being conducted to prepare these boys for farm work. The service clubs are generally very active in the farm labor field and businessmen have offered to go out and work on farms. This plan is approved by the farmers.

An attempt is being made to work out a plan with 260 local mine workers whereby half of them would work on farms for 2 weeks while the other half operated the mines. Then in 2 weeks they would change places.

There is a Farm Labor Subcommittee in practically all of the counties. These committees made a general appraisal in March of the prospective labor situation for this year and have followed this up with efforts to fully utilize available farm labor including: Urging that sugar beet workers have at least 8 months employment in Wyoming with other farm work to supplement beet work, suggesting changes in farm practices to conserve labor, and urging the training of unusual farm workers where such help is needed. In at least three counties the Farm Labor Committees have set up local representatives in each community of the county. These local representatives will be responsible for checking on the labor situation in these localities and for taking active leadership in "community pools" of labor or other means for meeting a shortage within the communities. (BAE)

IDAHO:

Information obtained in a meeting with range sheep and cattle men at Rexburg, Idaho, April 21, 1942, indicated that the range operators are faced with a very serious production problem as a result of the drafting of experienced hands.

Sheepherders and range riders are largely young, unattached men who are subject to early call in the draft. It is difficult to replace them. Very few such men are left and boys or married men will not take this kind of work because of the isolation. Only men who are acquainted with the geography of the local range country and are experienced in the type of range management can be used. If experienced range workers from other areas were brought in, they would not know the geography of the local range. Inexperienced sheepherders and range riders will waste forage resources by running stock across the range too fast. They will also lose an unusually high percentage of the stock. It is difficult for operators to direct the work of sheepherders and range riders, who must depend on their own resources for months at a time. There is no opportunity to secure relief by increasing the size of bands since bands are now the maximum size that can be handled.

The sheepmen who were at the meeting indicated that they are now holding approximately 25 percent of their sheep off the range because sheepherders are not available. This forces them to use feed needed for other livestock such as dairy cows.

The stockmen stated that the only practical solution to the problem would be for the local draft board to receive specific instruction from the proper authorities to defer agricultural workers who are needed locally--particularly sheepherders and range riders. If dependence is placed upon appealing from decisions of the local draft boards, most the workers will go into the armed forces for patriotic reasons and to avoid the publicity incident to an appeal. (BAE)

About 7,500 sugar beet thinners will be needed in Idaho. Lettuce blacking and weeding onions are in progress in Southwestern Idaho.

Among the critical spots in the labor situation are quite a few isolated farming areas in Idaho, Oregon, and Washington. These are areas which have always been dependent on family labor and never have employed any hired workers but now with the

due to the armed services and war industries, there is insufficient family labor left in the farms to do the work and consequently these isolated areas are becoming in need for hired labor in greater volume than ever before.

For the purpose of more effectively organizing farmers for dealing with labor scarcity, the Idaho War Board is considering a plan for establishing neighborhood leaders on farm lands throughout the state. This plan contemplates the designation of a local leader in each neighborhood of 10 to 20 farm families. The local leader would have responsibility for arranging labor and machinery pools among his neighbors, rotation of crews, staggering of planting and harvest dates, and other steps for achieving full utilization of labor and machinery at the most local level. The neighborhood leaders would jointly form a Community Farm Labor Committee with a chairman and a secretary. The Community Chairmen would be the responsible, recognized local representatives of farmers in the area and also representatives and contact points of the War Board, Employment Service, and Civilian Defense Council on matters pertaining to farm labor.

This scheme of organization developed spontaneously and at the present time is reported to be in successful operation in five Idaho counties. As a result of successful experience in these counties, the State War Board is contemplating putting the plan into state-wide operation. The neighborhood leaders designated for farm labor purposes will be integrated with the larger organization of voluntary rural leaders being established under direction of the Extension Service. (IWS)

Utah (10)

In many sections late lambing has started and several farmers reported that they are short-handed. Adverse weather has been hard on new lambs and they have required additional care. Shearing operations are also under way in many areas, and there is some possibility of being short of shearers. (BAE)

Farmers in the San Luis Valley area are greatly concerned about farm labor supplies and are questioning the interest in the War Camp program. However, reports indicate that there is a surplus of farm labor in the San Luis Valley which could be recruited for other areas in the State provided that transportation and housing could be furnished. In most areas of Colorado farm workers could and should be stabilized within the area. (FSA)

Outlook—Latest reports from sugar beet growers continuing beet acreage in Colorado indicate that 211,000 acres have been planted. This represents an increase of about 60 percent as contrasted with the 20 to 25 percent acreage increase anticipated in the report for last month.

Did the beet acreage increase have limited to that indicated in the labor report for April, it seems probable that Colorado would have needed to import little or no outside beet labor. However, with the added increase in acreage the Colorado LBS estimates that about 3,500 beet laborers will be needed from northern New Mexico.

The Colorado LBS War Board has warned their studies of labor requirements by creating and indicating that war agencies anticipate shortages at some peak season.

during the year. The shortages which have appeared or which are likely to appear within the next 60 days consist largely of a shortage of skilled millers in some parts of the heavier milk shed. Also there are some immediate local shortages of sheepherders and single ranch hands in the grazing districts of the Mountain and Western Slope Areas.

James Foster, Colorado State EAA Representative, estimates that if the 3,500 beet workers needed can be supplied from outside the state by the Employment Service, remaining agricultural shortages can be met through more effective utilization of local labor already available to harvesters, fruit, truck, grain, and other agricultural crops outside of sugar beets.

Program--The USIS office in Colorado states that, working in collaboration with the New Mexico office, arrangements have been made to import the 3,500 needed Spanish American beet workers.

In all of the 55 counties in Colorado labor subcommittees of the USA War Board have been set up. This number includes all counties where peak labor might conceivably become a problem. Registration of 1940- and part-time laborers has been completed in 22 counties and is under way in 22 others. The others indicate that there is either no problem involved or the anticipated results would not justify the effort. Other activities of the subcommittees on labor include plans for the use of WPA and WFL workers, registration of school youth and women for farm work, plans to use housewives during vacation and leisure-time periods and provisions for exchange of labor among farmers. They are also studying labor training programs, plans for housing migratory labor and transportation problems of migratory and local laborers. (EAA)

UTAH:

Outlook--Because of its strategic location there has been a tremendous growth of war industries as well as military training and reserve centers in Utah over the reported last month.

Since the 1940 census indicated that in one entire state there were only 181,000 persons in the labor force and available for work, 14 years of age and over, the war-related industry has created a demand for more than half of the total available labor in the State.

However, due to the small size of farms and consequent limitation of operations, the labor shortage period will, for the most part, be rather closely limited to peak agricultural production periods.

The situation in Utah then still remains, although on a considerably augmented scale, one of providing new sources of peak season labor.

Program--The labor program being carried forward by the labor subcommittee of the USWA War Board in Utah is essentially one of recruitment and training of student labor coming largely from the high school groups. Other groups which the committee

is planning to tap in greater or lesser degree are farm women, remaining with seasonal, and people over 55 years of age who are normally little used in agricultural pursuits. (BAE)

NEW MEXICO:

On March 14--The April labor report for New Mexico indicated the existence of agitation for opening the border to Mexican labor. Pressure to obtain this action has approached a climax during recent weeks.

This demand for an "open-door policy" appears to be based on a belief that farm labor from the northern counties of surplus labor supply is not available to them and, if it were, would not be desirable. There seems little doubt that the drive for importation of Mexican labor has as its main purpose the holding down of wage rates through the provision of an available surplus. Evidence of this appeared at a recent meeting of farmers of Dona Ana County, New Mexico, El Paso and Hudonville Counties, Texas in El Paso, at which the intention of paying imported labor \$1.00 per a 10-hour day was expressed.

The relationship of the labor supply to the wage rate is well illustrated by the cotton chopping situation in Dona Ana County. Farmers in that county have placed orders with the Employment Service for approximately 350 cotton choppers to remain to work between May 15 and May 30. A tabulation of the wages offered was made by the Employment Service and approximates an average of \$1.60 per day without board. Very few farmers were willing to pay \$2.00 a day. However, the Farm Placement Supervisor of Dona Ana County now has 6 crews of 25 people each registered with the U.S.S. as available for cotton chopping -- at a minimum wage of \$2.00 a day plus transportation to and from the farm in those instances where the group may be so sized and adequate housing is not available on this farm. These workers, in the supervisor's opinion, together with independently recruited labor, would undoubtedly meet the chopping demand in the county if such a wage were to be established, at a wage of less than \$2.00, he believes, there will be a shortage of choppers. In the opinion of the chairman of the USDA War Board, himself a cotton farmer in the Pecos Valley, present cotton prices justify day wages of \$2.00 or more.

Even though New Mexico is usually referred to as a State of labor surplus, there is a distinct possibility that agricultural labor in peak periods may be scarce, due to the competition of other States for agricultural labor, unless New Mexico cotton growers are willing to meet competitive wage scales, housing conditions, and transportation facilities. At present nonagricultural competition for agricultural labor appears not to be as severe as in neighboring States of the area, although such competition may be expected to increase as planned war projects become actual. This increase may occur particularly in Chavez and Yddy Counties due to the location of war projects in the vicinity of Carlsbad and Roswell. Projects of a less extensive nature are contemplated in the Deming and Las Cruces areas.

As it is frequently mentioned in our reports that a surplus labor population exists in the counties of northern New Mexico, it might be well to point out here that the effective work capacities of these people is known to be hampered by poor

health conditions. A number of Spanish-Americans from the northern part of the State who have been referred to the railroads for employment have been rejected because they could not meet the physical requirements. Within the last 6 weeks, Dr. Michele Pijoan of the Rockefeller Foundation, on loan to the Department of Interior, has examined approximately 1,200 inhabitants of Canon de Taos, a Spanish-American settlement in New Mexico. His findings indicate that fully 87 percent of the people examined existed on rations so sparse in nutriment as to render them incapable of effective labor. He avers that the average diet would not supply energy sufficient for more than about 4 hours of labor per day. As there appears to be relatively little variation in the levels of living of this group in northern New Mexico, this would seem to cast some serious doubts upon the present capacities of these people as an effective source of labor.

Program--The USES, working through the victory councils and USDA War Boards at both county and State levels, is conducting a survey aimed at cataloging full- and part-time labor available both in rural and urban areas for agricultural occupations. This work is under way at present in about 25 of the 31 counties. The USES reports that it should be completed by July 15.

The farm labor subcommittee has been attempting to secure additional migratory housing facilities in several areas of the State through the acquisition for this purpose of vacated CCC camps. It is planned that FSA be given jurisdiction over the operation of such camps. At present the farm labor subcommittee is trying to make arrangements to make available two or three such camps, one in Otero County and possibly two in Eddy County.

Because of the scarcity of building materials and priorities the FSA migratory labor camp program in New Mexico will probably be halted, at least for the 1942 harvest season, even though land for one such camp has already been optioned at Artesia in the Pecos Valley area of Eddy County.

In an effort to improve the health conditions of the farm labor force in northern New Mexico, the FSA in Amarillo, Texas, is contemplating the preparation of a docket for a health and medical program in northern New Mexico. (BAE)

NEVADA:

In Clark County there may be need for an additional hundred laborers. A committee is to be formed to secure the cooperation of such Federal agencies as might be necessary to investigate the citizenship and character of any imported labor.

The present emergency in pea harvesting is making for daily losses owing to shortage of about 100 men. Unless these men can be supplied there will also be serious losses sustained in the tomato plant crop.

In Douglas County the only possible additional source of labor not yet fully taken advantage of would be alien labor. This requires housing, which is very hard to provide at the present time.

In Washoe County the training of high school boys in handling draft horses has been under way for one month with an enrollment of 28 students. This school is being conducted in cooperation with the Experiment Station. (WB)

ARIZONA:

Outlook--Reports of scarcity of migratory and local seasonal labor are still widespread. Such reports emanate from Government representatives as well as from organized farm groups such as the Farm Bureau Federation. This is no new phenomenon for Arizona. The figures issued by various Arizona agencies seem to indicate shortages of as many as 30,000 agricultural workers.

An official of the USBS believes that such estimates of labor shortage are considerably exaggerated. In this connection he said, "Invisible pools of agricultural labor exist in every community, in every village, on every farm." He further went on to say that a reasonable wage would usually suffice to bring this not-readily-seen labor force into agriculture.

There is growing concern over farm workers leaving to work on construction of Japanese interment camps in Maricopa and Pinal Counties. Wages paid at these camps average better than 80 cents an hour which is far above any farm labor scale.

In spite of repeated statements to the contrary, it seems apparent that the need for workers in the construction of military projects cannot be considered entirely competitive with agriculture as Army officers have stated that in many cases where large numbers of workers were required, the projects would be of not more than 6 weeks duration and that labor so engaged would be released well in advance of the peak season in cotton picking.

There is the further possibility that overestimation of labor shortage has occurred in that there appears to have been no official contacts made with superintendents of Indian reservations relative to the number of Indians who might accept farm work at specific wage levels and conditions of work.

Further competition in the agricultural labor market in Arizona appears to come from the beet fields of Colorado. About 10 days ago, the Great Western Sugar Company reportedly recruited some 950 workers from around Phoenix, Arizona, for work in the Colorado beet fields. This company provided gasoline credit cards for those who owned automobiles; in some instances is said to have purchased "jalopies" for families and in other cases provided common carrier transportation. Credit cards when thus issued were restricted in such a way that they could be used only at certain stations along the route to the Colorado job.

Agitation for letting down the bars at the Mexican border continues and appears to be growing.

There appears to be a definite shortage of skilled farm hands, particularly experienced tractor drivers, dairymen, irrigators, and feeders.

A housing survey completed in March 1942 by FSA indicates that on the whole housing for migratory labor in Arizona, although bad in spots is, in general, better than that in States with which Arizona will be competing for migratory labor. This would appear to be a differential factor favoring the movement of experienced migratory seasonal labor into Arizona in preference to competitive areas.

Program - The program appears thus far to be not too extensive in its effort to bring forth unused labor resources than is true in other States in the region. The major concern appears to be with bringing in outside labor rather than with more intense utilization of resident population.

The farm labor subcommittee has approved action to enlist aid of the State Department relative to determining the conditions that would have to be met if an "open-door policy" with respect to the importation of Mexicans is to be accomplished. There is some uneasiness on the part of farm leaders regarding the importation of Mexican labor since the copper mines are also exerting pressure for more labor and might raid such Mexican labor as the farmers might bring in.

Another part of the program as it is actually being carried on in Arizona is the attempt to make sure that laborers recruited for the beet fields to the north will be returned at the expiration of the contract season so that they may be available for Arizona harvest seasons later. This policy is being carried out by the Farm Labor subcommittee through direct contacts with the sugar beet companies.

Aside from the machine operations training schools, no other agricultural labor training programs exist at present according to a representative of the USLC. In his opinion, a great need exists for trained dairymen. Schools for training dairymen have been started under the auspices of FFA, WPA, WPA, and the USLC, but have failed, in large part, because of the difficulty of obtaining milk cows for the use of such schools. (BAE)

PACIFIC STATES

WASHINGTON:

Work on sugar beets is going on, with a real labor problem ahead. The demand for labor on both dairy and poultry farms has expanded the supply all spring, and this condition continues. (BAE)

To date 67 percent of the transferring of Japanese from the defense area has been effected. (BS)

Numerous farm labor committees and War Boards have concerned themselves with the problem of stabilizing wages to prevent excessive labor turnover and working about in search of better pay. In only a few cases, however, have committees and War Boards taken definite action to establish wage limits. In several Southwestern Washington Counties the farm labor committees have jointly agreed upon a suggested standard wage schedule for the area, establishing wages varying from \$7.00 to \$12.00 a day with board for various classes of employees.

The War Board in Stevens County, Washington, has adopted a wage schedule of \$40.00 per month for steady farm hands and \$3.00 per day on short jobs. This schedule is high for Stevens County but lower than nearby counties, and considerably lower than the State average farm wage. (BAE)

OREGON:

At the present time harvesting operations have not yet begun although the spring work is pretty well along. Most of the comments from reporters express the opinion that the scarcity of workers will not be felt until harvest gets under way. Berry picking will start the latter part of May. Some reporters expressed the belief that school children, along with other workers available, will be able to take care of the berry crop. (BAE)

Sugar beet companies and some other grower interests in Eastern Oregon and Idaho have been strongly urging the release of Japanese evacuees from assembly centers to do farm labor. Colonel Bendetsen, Chief of the WCCA, has announced certain conditions under which release of Japanese workers for private employment will be permitted by the Army. Briefly, these conditions call for guarantees from growers, county boards of supervisors and sheriffs of absolute protection of the individual and the community, guarantee of prevailing wages, sanitary housing facilities, and transportation. The Army conditions are fairly stringent and have considerably diminished the attractiveness of Japanese evacuees as a source of labor. It is not yet known to what extent the conditions can be met.

In Oregon the War Board has already decided that the 1942 dairy production goals cannot be obtained, and this is attributed in part to labor shortage.

The latest reports of the Division of Agricultural Statistics indicate about 20 percent of the farm jobs in Washington and Oregon being held by women.

Women and older children are being employed more and more frequently to do jobs formerly reserved for men, even for Orientals and Mexicans.

In Oregon the Employment Service has sponsored a State-wide campaign for registering women available for war work. More than 100,000 women signed up including 34,000 who indicated availability for agricultural work.

Women have been extensively employed this year in Willamette Valley hop yards on wiring, training, and resetting poles. Women have always been used to some extent in this operation, but to a greater extent this year than for many years past. Women are in the majority in many hop yards this year.

The Spreckels Sugar Company in California and the Amalgamated Company in Oregon and Idaho are making loans to their contracting growers for the construction of camps and labor houses.

In Multnomah County, Oregon, a committee of berry growers in the Gresham districts have worked out a plan for transportation, using school buses. They first contacted the School Board which supplied them with mileage cost records, with driver and without driver, as a basis for determining a reasonable cost per mile for operating the buses. The committee's second step was to take care of insurance coverage and permission to transport persons over the State highways. Finally, the committee employed a man familiar with the work to act as dispatcher for the buses, to see that buses are used to the best advantage. Under the plan, the U. S. Employment Service agreed to recruit workers at certain assembly points in Portland and nearby towns, and the buses are to pick up the workers at these points and carry them to the berry fields. The committee proposes to handle payment for transportation by requiring the dispatcher and bus drivers to keep a daily record of the number of pickers and miles hauled to each farmer, and at the end of the season or some other appropriate time the cost of the transportation will be prorated to each grower according to the actual number of pickers transported.

Another Oregon plan for transportation is that of the Amalgamated Sugar Company acting in cooperation with the U. S. Employment Service. The company uses a standard agreement between itself and workers who furnish their own transportation whereby the worker pays his own expenses until he arrives in Nyssa, Oregon, and goes to work. After he is hired, he is then reimbursed according to the distance traveled. For workers who do not have their own transportation, arrangements have been made with the Employment Service whereby transportation is purchased for the workers. (BAE)

The question was raised at a War Board meeting regarding the use of conscientious objectors from the camp in Oregon. It was pointed out that OADR was now holding conferences with various groups and organizations and that men from these camps were being used on an experimental basis in some of the eastern States. If this proves satisfactory no doubt the plan will be extended to other areas. The plan would provide that men from these camps would receive prevailing wages and that these wages would be paid direct to the National Service Board, which would in turn disburse of the money over and above the cost of such articles as were allotted each occupant by the Board and that it would be necessary that such workers be furnished to the farmer on a permanent working basis.

relative to surveys of the movement of migratory labor, it was pointed out that there had been over thirty-five hundred workers come into the Medford area in excess of the number needed in the construction of the army cantonment. It was stated that these people were moving on to other areas, although a few were remaining and doing field work in the pear orchards and other farm occupations.

CALIFORNIA:

The farm labor situation at the present time is critical in spots. A general shortage of farm labor has yet appeared but there are acute shortages in certain localities, in a few crops, and of special types of labor.

The latest Employment Service farm labor report for California lists shortages amounting to nearly 5,500 workers throughout the State and a State-wide surplus of more than 5,000 workers. These totals result from cumulating the reports of shortages and surplus from various local offices. There is ample evidence of the sufficient mobility of agricultural workers to meet the rapidly shifting patterns of need. Hence, we see labor surpluses and labor shortages existing side by side.

Mr. William Darsie, Chairman of the California Farm Labor Subcommittee, analyzed this situation in a recent report to the State War Board in which he pointed out that the ordinary conduct of California agriculture demands a surplus of labor. Only with a general surplus, Mr. Darsie said, could there be assurance to growers of adequate labor supply to meet rapidly changing demands for labor. Mr. Darsie went on to say that the average California farmer, accustomed to a surplus of labor, does not know how to recruit labor and has no confidence in the ability of any public agency to get labor for him.

Adequate or surplus labor supplies are reported from Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange, Tulare, Merced, Stanislaus, and Kern Counties, particularly in peas, potatoes, and Valencia oranges. From Orange County it is reported that about 2,000 surplus pickers are awaiting employment in the Valencia harvest, due to begin shortly. Adequate labor supplies for citrus picking are also reported in Ventura and Tulare Counties. The market pea harvest, now nearing completion, has had abundant labor throughout. Labor shortages are reported from Solano, Yuba, La Joaquin, Sacramento, San Diego, Monterey, Sutter, and Yuba Counties. Severe shortages are evident in asparagus and sugar beets. The labor situation in these crops has been aggravated by rainy weather, making it impossible to work regularly. The sugar beet companies operating in the San Joaquin and Sacramento Valleys encouraged a program of staggered plantings, both in anticipation of a scarce labor supply and for efficiency in processing. Sugar beet thinning was originally scheduled to extend over a period of about three months. Inability to get into the fields because of wet weather has telescoped the thinning season and hastened the growth of both beets and weeds. The Bally Sugar Company estimated that thinning of acreage planted was about 41 percent completed last week. At that time, however, there still remained about 20 percent of the contracted acreage to be planted.

Striking evidence of the parallel existence of labor surplus and labor shortage is the employment situation in the Farm Security Administration migratory labor camps. This office tabulates weekly reports of the employment situation in all

FSA camps in California and Arizona. As of the last week in April nearly half of all workers in all camps were totally unemployed and many of the remainder were only partially employed. Measured in terms of available man-hours the labor supply in FSA camps was only about 30 percent utilized. On May 1 there were 1,317 families receiving grants from the Farm Security Administration. This situation points to the need for more vigorous policy labor recruitment and transfer.

Labor immobility is aggravated and recruitment efforts hampered by the reluctance of local communities to permit their workers to move on even though they may be temporarily unemployed. An example of this occurred in Ventura County. There was a surplus of workers for sugar beet thinning in that county; growers in Santa Barbara County, a few miles distant, were clamoring for labor. The Santa Barbara County Employment Service (non-Federal) requested the transfer of 250 unemployed beet workers from Ventura County but the Ventura growers Employment Service (also non-Federal) decided not to refer their workers out of the county on grounds that they would be needed in Ventura in another two months.

Labor shortages and surpluses are also related to differentials in wages. Generally, wages this year are from 30 percent to 40 percent higher than last year but in some areas the rise in wages has been considerably smaller. In San Diego County where the base rate for field labor is 40 cents an hour there are rumors and threats of a strike, to be pulled after the Japanese are finally evacuated, to raise the basic rate to 50 cents. A representative of a grower's association in that area stated to a semipublic meeting, with Government officials present, that if the growers could have some assurance of eventual importation of Mexican labor it would help to give them courage to resist wage demands.

The employment of high school children has also been helpful in some instances to prevent wage raises. In Alameda County a crew of Mexican workers demanded \$14 per acre for thinning beets and, being refused, quit the job. Their places were taken by a Victory Corps from nearby high schools, doing the job at \$10 per acre, that being \$1 above the Government scale for sugar beet thinning. The Victory Corps boys were referred to work by the U. S. Employment Service.

The evacuation of Japanese is creating critical labor shortages in certain localities and for certain types of labor such as chick sexers, fruit pickers, hop dryer operators, and general vegetable workers.

Interstate migration continues to be an important element in the labor situation in California and Arizona. During the month of April, 7,503 persons in parties in need of manual employment entered California by motor vehicle. This was an increase of about 1,400 over March but was more than 2,200 less than in April a year ago.

A recent production goals survey in Sonoma County, California, indicated failure to meet the quota on egg production and an actual decrease in milk production.

The latter is attributed by dairymen to two causes, first of all, they say that lack of labor make it impossible for them to milk their cows properly. With such labor as they have they claim to be able to put milking machines on the cows but are unable to strip them. Another cause of the decrease in milk production is said to be the poor quality of last year's hay crop, and it is feared that insufficient labor may cause this year's hay crop to lie in the fields too long with resulting repercussions on next year's dairy production.

Reports from growers of avocados, lemons, and limes in Southern California indicate slow progress of picking with resulting deterioration in quality of the fruit. In the Delta region old asparagus beds, producing low quality grass, are being plowed up. The cause here seems to be not so much absolute lack of labor but high cost of labor, making it unprofitable to cut grass which does not command a good price in the markets.

In all Western States high school children are being registered and enrolled for farm work. Victory corps are being formed in many communities. State Departments of Education and local schools are actively participating in this effort. War Boards, Farm Labor Committees, and the Employment Service are cooperating in most instances. Detailed programs for employing high school children are being worked out at the community level within the framework of State-wide plans, which are more generalized. As an example of such local planning for use of high school students we may cite plans made in Alameda County. The Alameda Plan provides, in the first place, that student labor will be used only upon certification of a local labor shortage by some responsible body, ordinarily the War Board or Farm Labor Subcommittee. In the second place students will only be used on jobs to which they have been called by the U. S. Employment Service. The school authorities decline to set up an employment office of their own. Third, work on part of the student is entirely voluntary. He must sign up each day that he desires to work. Each student must present a written statement of consent from his parents. Wage rates will be established by the County War Board or County Farm Labor Subcommittee in consultation with the employer. A learning period is established for each operation in which the student has had no previous experience and he is paid at less than regular rates until he can work at normal speed. At the end of this training period he is to be paid at prevailing wages. Differences in working conditions may sometimes call for a departure from the prevailing rate. Responsibility for supervision of the students is divided between the employer and school officials. The employer is responsible for establishing the standards of work, seeing that the work is done according to standard, and keeping the labor records. Instructors are sent from the high school who are responsible for student discipline, attendance, and work credits. Transportation to and from the job is provided by the high school. School busses are used free of charge for this purpose at Hayward, but Hayward busses are charging 15¢ per pupil for transportation of San Leandro pupils to the work. The usual liability policies cover the risks of this type of transportation.

Experience under this plan so far appears to have been fairly satisfactory. Sixty students from the Hayward High School have worked at sugar beet thinning and an equal number have come from Centerville, San Leandro, and Oakland.

The Alameda County plan is cited merely as an example of scores of local programs coming into existence throughout the region for recruitment and employment of high school boys and girls.

In California the YMCA is establishing about a dozen work camps for boys throughout the State. These camps will operate in conjunction with programs for recruitment of victory corps or farm workers.

In line with the increasing utilization of new sources of farm labor, traditional hiring standards are beginning to break down. A month ago, at the peak of sugar beet thinning in Southern California and Central Coast counties, growers were insisting on Mexican and Filipino labor. White men seeking this type of work were turned away even though there was a general clamor of labor shortage. At present hiring standards have been considerably relaxed and to an increasing extent growers are willing to use any labor available. (BAE)

There remains some confusion as to the exact relationship between labor subcommittees and the State and county War Boards. In some places it is assumed that the labor subcommittee both gathers material and coordinates efforts. In others it is assumed that the War Board remains in charge of any coordinative activity whatever. There seems to be great variation in the extent to which labor subcommittees in counties have got under way. (OI)

From the standpoint of available labor supply there seems to be little justification for importation of labor from Mexico at this time. It is believed that appropriate safeguards should be established in behalf of domestic and foreign farm workers if Mexican workers are brought in.

The State Board of Agriculture has passed resolutions that (1) additional funds be granted the FSA to enable it to provide more mobile camps and to deal with transportation problems; and that (2) the staff and facilities of the Farm Placement Service be ample to enable it to perform its functions adequately. (FSA)

